

# Section 4: Transporting Passengers

Bus drivers must have a commercial driver's license if they drive a vehicle designed to seat more than 15 persons, including the driver. However, you are not considered a bus driver if you only carry family members for personal reasons.

Bus drivers must have a passenger endorsement on their commercial driver's license. To get the endorsement you must pass a written test on Sections 2, 3, and 4 of this manual. (If your bus has air brakes, you must also pass a written test on Section 5.) You must also pass the performance tests required for the class of vehicle you drive. This section has information you must know to drive a bus safely.

## **This Section Covers**

- **Definition of a Bus**
- **Pretrip Inspection**
- **Loading**
- **Safe Driving with Buses**

Before driving your bus, make sure it is safe. During the pretrip inspection check defects reported by previous drivers. Only if defects reported earlier have been fixed, should you sign the previous driver's report. This is your certification that the defects reported earlier have been fixed.

## **4.1 Pretrip Inspection**

Make sure these things are in good working order before driving

- Service brakes, including air hose couplings (if your bus has a trailer or semi-trailer)
- Parking brake
- Steering mechanism
- Lights and reflectors
- Tires (front wheels must not have recapped or regrooved tires)
- Horn
- Windshield wiper or wipers
- Rear-vision mirror or mirrors
- Coupling devices
- Wheels and rims

### **· Vehicle Systems**

As you check the outside of the bus, close any open emergency exits. Also close any open access panels (for baggage, restroom service, engine, etc) before driving.

### **· Access Doors & Panels**

People sometimes damage unattended buses. Always check the interior of the bus before driving to ensure rider safety. Aisles and stairwells must always be clear. The following parts of your bus must be in safe working condition.

- each handhold and railing
- floor covering
- signaling devices, including the restroom emergency buzzer, if the bus has a restroom
- emergency exit handles

### **· Bus Interior**

The seats must be safe for riders. All seats must be securely fastened to the bus. There is one exception to this rule. A charter bus carrying agricultural workers may have up to 8 temporary folding seats in the aisle.

Never drive with an open emergency exit door or window. The "Emergency Exit" sign on an emergency door must be clearly visible. If there is a red emergency door light, it must work. Turn it on at night or any other time you use your outside lights.

#### · **Roof Hatches**

You may lock some emergency roof hatches in a partly open position for fresh air. Do not leave them open as a regular practice. Keep in mind the bus's higher clearance while driving with them open.

Make sure your bus has the fire extinguisher and emergency reflectors required by law. The bus must also have spare electrical fuses unless equipped with circuit breakers.

#### · **Use Your Seatbelt!**

The driver's seat should have a seat belt. Always use it for safety.

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## 4.2 Loading and Trip Start

Do not allow riders to leave carry-on baggage in a doorway or aisle. There should be nothing in the aisle that might trip other riders. Secure baggage and freight in ways that avoid damage and

- allow the driver to move freely and easily
- allow riders to exit by any window or door in an emergency
- protect riders from injury if carry-ons fall or shift

#### · **Hazardous Materials**

Watch for cargo or baggage containing hazardous materials. Most hazardous materials cannot be carried on a bus.

The Federal Hazardous Materials Table shows which materials are hazardous. They pose a risk to health, safety, and property during transportation. The rules require shippers to mark containers of hazardous material with the material's name, ID number, and hazard label. There are 22 different 4 inch diamond shaped hazard labels like the examples shown in Figure 4-1. A chart showing all the labels is at the back of this manual. Watch for the diamond shaped labels. Do not transport any hazardous material unless you are sure the rules allow it.

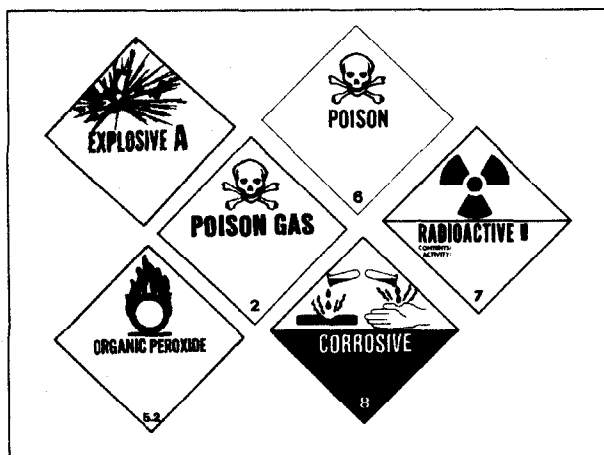


Figure 4-1  
Examples of Labels.

Buses may carry small-arms ammunition labeled ORM-D, emergency hospital supplies and drugs. You can carry small amounts of some other hazardous materials if the shipper cannot send them any other way. Buses must **never** carry

- Class A poison, **liquid** Class B poison, tear gas, irritating material
- more than 100 pounds of **solid** Class B poisons
- explosives in the space occupied by people, except small arms ammunition
- labeled radioactive materials in the space occupied by people
- more than 500 pounds total of allowed hazardous materials, and no more than 100 pounds of any one class

· **Forbidden  
Hazardous Materials**

Riders sometimes board a bus with an unlabeled hazardous material. They may not know it is unsafe. Do not allow riders to carry on common hazards such as car batteries or gasoline.

No rider may stand forward of the rear of the driver's seat. Buses designed to allow standing must have a 2 inch line on the floor or some other means of showing riders where they can not stand. This is called the standee line. All standing riders must stay behind it.

· **Standee Line**

When arriving at the destination or intermediate stops announce

- the location,
- reason for stopping,
- next departure time, and
- bus number

· **At Your Destination**

Remind riders to take carry-ons with them if they get off the bus. If the aisle is on a lower level than the seats, remind riders of the step-down. It is best to tell them before coming to a complete stop.

Charter bus drivers should not allow riders on the bus until departure time. This will help prevent theft or vandalism of the bus.

**Passenger supervision while driving.** Many charter and intercity carriers have passenger comfort and safety rules. Mention rules about smoking, drinking, or use of radio & tape players at the start of the trip. Explaining the rules at the start will help to avoid trouble later on.

## 4.3 On The Road

· **Passenger Supervision**

While driving, scan the interior of your bus as well as the road ahead, to the sides, and to the rear. You may have to remind riders about rules, or to keep arms and heads inside the bus.

### Test Your Knowledge

1. Name some things to check in the interior of a bus during pre-trip inspection.
2. What are some hazardous materials you **can** transport by bus?
3. What are some hazardous materials you **can't** transport by bus?
4. What is a standee line?

These questions may be on your test. If you can't answer all, reread Sections 4.1 and 4.2.

### · **At Stops**

Riders can stumble when getting on or off and when the bus starts or stops. Caution riders to watch their step when leaving the bus. Wait for them to sit down or brace themselves before starting. Starting and stopping should be as smooth as possible to avoid rider injury.

Occasionally, you may have a drunk or disruptive rider. You must ensure this rider's safety as well as that of others. Don't discharge such riders where it would be unsafe for them. It may be safer at the next scheduled stop, or a well lighted area where there are other people. Many carriers have guidelines for handling disruptive riders.

### · **Common Accidents**

**The most common bus crashes.** Bus crashes often happen at intersections. Use caution, even if a signal or stop sign controls other traffic. School and mass transit buses sometimes scrape off mirrors or hit passing vehicles when pulling out from a bus stop. Remember the clearance your bus needs, and watch for poles and tree limbs at stops. Know the size of the gap your bus needs to accelerate and merge with traffic. Wait for the gap to open before leaving the stop. Never assume other drivers will brake to give you room when you signal or start to pull out.

### · **Speed on Curves**

Crashes on curves kill people and destroy buses. They result from excessive speed, often when rain or snow has made the road slippery. Every banked curve has a safe "design speed." In good weather, the posted speed is safe for cars, but it may be too high for many buses. With good traction, the bus may roll over; with poor traction it might slide off the curve. **Reduce speed for curves!** If your bus leans toward the outside on a banked curve, you are driving too fast.

### · **Railroad Crossings**

**Stop at RR crossings.** Stop your bus between 15 and 50 feet before railroad crossings. Listen and look in both directions for trains. You should open your forward door if it improves your ability to see or hear an approaching train. Before crossing after a train has passed, make sure there isn't another train coming in the other direction on other tracks. If your bus has a manual transmission, don't change gears while crossing the tracks.

You do not have to stop, but must slow down and carefully check for other vehicles

- at street car crossings,
- at railroad tracks used only for industrial switching within a business district,
- where a policeman or flagman is directing traffic,
- if a traffic signal shows green, and
- at crossings marked "exempt crossing"

**Stop at drawbridges.** Stop at drawbridges that do not have a signal light or traffic control attendant. Stop at least 50 feet before the draw of the bridge. Look to make sure the draw is completely closed before crossing. You do not need to stop, but must slow down and make sure it's safe, when

- there is a traffic light showing green
- the bridge has an attendant or traffic officer that controls traffic whenever the bridge opens

## **Drawbridges**

Inspect your bus at the end of each shift. If you work for an interstate carrier, you must complete a written inspection report for each bus driven. The report must specify each bus and list any defect that would affect safety or result in a breakdown. If there are no defects, the report should say so.

Riders sometimes damage safety related parts such as hand-holds, seats, emergency exits, and windows. If you report this damage at the end of a shift, mechanics can make repairs before the bus goes out again. Mass transit drivers should also make sure passenger signaling devices and brake-door interlocks work properly.

## **4.4 After-Trip Vehicle Inspection**

Avoid fueling your bus with riders on board unless absolutely necessary. Never refuel in a closed building with riders on board.

Don't talk with riders, or engage in any other distracting activity, while driving.

Do not tow or push a disabled bus with riders aboard either vehicle, unless getting off would be unsafe. Only tow or push the bus to the nearest safe spot to discharge passengers. Follow your employer's guidelines on towing or pushing disabled buses.

## **4.5 Prohibited Practices**

Urban mass transit coaches may have a brake and accelerator interlock system. The interlock applies the brakes and holds the throttle in idle position when the rear door is open. The interlock releases when you close the rear door. Do not use this safety feature in place of the parking brake.

## **4.6 Use of Brake-Door Interlocks**

### **Test Your Knowledge**

1. Does it matter where you make a disruptive passenger get off the bus?
2. How far from a railroad crossing should you stop?
3. When must you stop before crossing a drawbridge?
4. Describe from memory the "prohibited practices" listed above.
5. The rear door of a transit bus has to be open to put on the parking brake. True or false?

These questions may be on your test. If you can't answer all, reread Section 4.3.